

## **Education, racial justice and the limits of inclusion in settler colonial Australia**

Sophie Rudolph, Melbourne Graduate School of Education, University of Melbourne, Melbourne

Archie Thomas, School of Communication, University of Technology Sydney, Sydney

### **Abstract:**

Education both actively excludes (through suspensions and expulsions) and tries to include (through inclusion policies, programs and pathways). Students who experience both exclusion and attempts at inclusion tend to be racialised Black, Brown and/or Indigenous; identify as queer or trans; be experiencing poverty; and/or be disabled. As the emergent comparative international literature on education and carcerality notes, these are also the young people who tend to experience incarceration in settler colonial states. In this article we draw on and develop the metaphor of the ‘school to prison pipeline’, which originated in the United States, to examine the contours of educational exclusion in Australia. We map a range of ‘modes of exclusion’ that we illustrate are based on the interconnected racial logics of settler colonialism, carcerality and racial capitalism. We propose a new research agenda for understanding the links between racial domination, criminality, and educational exclusion in settler colonial contexts which seeks to go beyond normative models of inclusion.

**Keywords:** youth incarceration, school-to-prison pipeline, settler colonialism, discipline, racism

## **Introduction: white anxieties and discipline**

‘We don’t have a race problem here in Australia ... this is not our war’— so declared David Elliott, the Minister for Education in the conservative Liberal and National Coalition Government of the Australian state of New South Wales (NSW), after right-wing tabloid *The Daily Telegraph* decried images of school student posters responding to the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement. Two slogans raised conservative ire: ‘Stop killer cops’ and ‘Pigs out of the country.’ The posters were on display at Lindfield Learning Village in Sydney, and, according to the principal, emerged from a critical thinking exercise that implored students to reflect on their understanding of Indigenous history. Both the self-described ‘furious’ Education Minister and the tabloid were following the lead of far-right politician Mark Latham, of the white supremacist party One Nation, who had provided the photos to the newspaper. Mimicking the talking points of the transnational backlash against BLM and trans rights, Latham declared that ‘Political voodoo theories’ like ‘white privilege’ were ‘destroying the innocence of childhood’ (Adams 2021). Amidst this confected crisis, the school principal relented to criticism of the school’s apparent ‘cop-hating’ and invited the NSW Police Commissioner to visit the school campus (Harris 2021).

At the time of the Lindfield Learning College scandal, Indigenous-led campaigns in Australia were making connections to police brutality in the US, Indigenous deaths in custody and high rates of incarceration and police harassment (McQuire 2020). The NSW Education Minister’s insistence that BLM was ‘not our war’ followed a conservative discourse of denial which rejected connections between the US experience and Australia’s, and connections of responsibility between the justice system and the education system (McQuire 2020). Yet the conflict at Lindfield Learning Village highlighted exactly what the Minister sought to deny: the importance of schooling to the project of building a society

governed by settler colonial denial of Indigenous interests and sovereignty (Thomas & Marsden, 2021). The ‘white anxiety’ (Moreton-Robinson 2020, 87) evident in the Minister’s response speaks to the racial relations of power in schooling that BLM has served to challenge and unsettle (Mayorga and Picower 2018). In seeking—and to some extent, succeeding—to discipline the school, the Minister only confirmed the need to investigate and challenge schools as sites of settler colonial nation-making and racial power (Sriprakash et al, 2022).

Inspired by BLM, we take up that challenge here to examine the connection between the schooling and justice systems in the Australian context, with a focus on the connections between forms of exclusion from school and carcerality. The link between school exclusion and carceral involvement has been conceptualised in the international literature as a ‘school-to-prison pipeline’ (Annamma, 2018) and sometimes understood within the context of racial capitalism (Melamed 2015). We begin by examining the politics of inclusion and exclusion in schooling. We then explore the important metaphor of the school-to-prison pipeline and locate school exclusion in the logics of the carceral state under racial capitalism. We consider expanding the metaphor to better account for the impact of racial capitalism in the present, paying particular attention to the dynamics of settler colonialism. We then define multiple modes of exclusion that operate in the largest states in Australia: New South Wales and Victoria. Bringing this together, we offer some initial possibilities for research that questions and challenges the politics of inclusion and exclusion in schooling in settler colonial contexts, proposing a new research agenda for understanding the links between racial capitalism, criminality, carcerality and educational exclusion in settler colonial contexts which seeks to go beyond normative models of inclusion and understand what can be done to advance global racial justice in education.

Our focus is on racialised exclusion, and we pay particular attention to Indigeneity, yet this is connected to other forms of oppression based on class, gender, sexuality, and ability. It is important to note here the connections between Indigenous<sup>1</sup> struggles in Australia and BLM. Indigenous activists in Australia have taken up the term Black (or Blak) as a label of pride, identification and solidarity for at least a century (Maynard 2007). A shared Black identity also works as a vehicle for solidarity between Indigenous communities and communities of colour within Australia (McQuire 2020). However, while there are deep connections, there are specific differences between analysing Indigeneity and race: Gomeri scholar Nikki Moodie (2018) argues for careful attention in education research to questions of dispossession, resistance and land reclamation which shape a uniquely Indigenous experience in settler colonial contexts. As white, settler Australians we aim to build greater understanding of the socio-political dynamics that hold white power in place, and to contribute to unsettling the racial dominance that is part of settler colonial rule.

### **The politics of inclusion and exclusion in education**

A belief in the importance of education as a straightforward social good is illustrated in numerous ways globally and locally. For example, the Sustainable Development Goals name the achievement of inclusive and equitable quality education for all as the fourth goal, while Australia's national policy to address Indigenous disadvantage includes four targets related to education and the Australian state of Victoria has a policy called 'Education for all' to guide

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<sup>1</sup> The collective terms for Indigenous people in Australia are: Indigenous, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and First Nations people. In this paper we use these terms interchangeably. However, we also acknowledge the inadequacy of these terms, that they are constructs of colonialism and are contested and debated at the same time as being accepted. We have also tried to use specific First Nations naming where this is possible.

teachers on issues of inclusion of students with disabilities.<sup>2</sup> This liberal framing of schooling creates a backdrop for debate on educational inclusion. The dominant frameworks of education policy and research advocate for inclusion as the solution to disadvantage and marginalisation. Students who ‘disengage’ or ‘refuse’ school are seen as ‘at risk’ and in need of inclusion (see Dadvand 2020; te Riele 2006). Students who are deemed to carry a marker of ‘difference’—via their status as Indigenous, refugee, queer, trans, or disabled for example—are positioned as in need of inclusion. This works to reinforce a notion of the educational mainstream as white, heteronormative and able-bodied, and in turn capable of offering pathways, policies and programs for inclusion to those considered different. While often driven by a concern for social justice, attempts at educational inclusion typically fail to interrupt the status quo and often contribute to preserving a dominant norm that creates the very need to include (see Ahmed 2012). While we are not arguing against inclusion on principle, a more complex and robust understanding of the dynamics of racialised exclusion in settler colonial contexts is necessary. This means extricating the built-in impediments to achieving education equity and justice, and asking the question, as Graham and Slee have: ‘when we talk of including, into what do we seek to include?’ (2008, 277).

At the same time as education policy seeks to include, a range of recent reports into school exclusions in a number of Australian states demonstrate that schools also formally exclude (see Victorian Ombudsman, 2017; New South Wales Ombudsman, 2017; Graham et al, 2020). This is supported by research that demonstrates that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are both more likely than non-Indigenous peers to be expelled from school and to become involved in the justice system (Cunneen 2019, McKnight et al 2019). These

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<sup>2</sup> Sustainable Development Goals: <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>; Closing the Gap in Indigenous Disadvantage: <https://www.closingthegap.gov.au/national-agreement/targets>; Education for All, Victoria: <https://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/Pages/Education-for-all.aspx>

trends of racialised criminality are consistent with international scholarship which identifies a strong correlation between school suspension/expulsion and criminal justice involvement (see Novak 2019, Sutherland 2011) and high proportions of racialised populations in youth prisons (see Chin et al 2019, Gillies 2016, Marchbanks et al 2018).

The global BLM movement has drawn renewed attention to the over policing and criminalisation of populations racialised as Black and Brown (Onus-Williams et al 2020, Jean 2020). There is a significant body of scholarship, originating predominantly from the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom, that illustrates the racial injustices many Black and Brown students face in schools (e.g. Baak 2019, Bain 2018, Bodkin-Andrews and Carlson 2016, Chetty 2018, Coloma 2013, Moodie et al 2019, Sriprakash et al 2020). This research shows the racialisation of the ‘achievement gap’ in the United States and the United Kingdom (Gillborn et al 2017, Ladson-Billings 2007, Valencia 2018). This is mirrored in Australia with Indigenous students and culturally and linguistically diverse students seen as needing to ‘catch up’ or ‘close the gap’ (Ford 2013, Lingard et al 2012, Rudolph, 2019). These discrepancies in educational outcomes are typically explained in policy as stemming from disadvantage caused by historical legacies, but often in a way that transfers responsibility for those historical legacies to individuals (Rudolph, 2016). The solutions proposed for this disadvantage usually fail to attend to the structural injustices and racialised inequalities that remain part of systems that were produced through colonialism and slavery (Dancy, Edwards and Davis 2018). In contrast, Gamilaroi scholar Michelle Bishop (2021) argues that the education system in Australia is beyond ‘reform’ and that Indigenous students cannot be served adequately by a system built out of colonialism. As we explore in more detail below, schooling has been part of the institutional apparatus used to dispossess

Indigenous communities globally and to educate with genocidal and disciplinary intent (see Sriprakash et al, 2022; Tuck and Guztambide-Fernández 2013; Herbert 2012).

Yet in Australia, education scholarship has largely ignored questions of racialised youth policing and structural racism, and their connection to school discipline procedures and exclusion. There has been some limited attention to school discipline and the emergence of ‘zero tolerance’ approaches and increasing surveillance in schools in Australia and New Zealand in the 1990s, influenced by US policies (Taylor & Kearney 2018). Debates about school inclusion/exclusion have been largely focused on issues experienced by disabled students or students deemed to have behavioural issues (see Graham & Sweller 2011, Slee 2004, Slee 1992). There is, therefore, an urgent need in Australia to develop a deeper understanding of the relationships between contemporary practices of racialised school exclusion, incarceration, and the living legacy of settler colonial dominance in contemporary Australian education. With this need in mind, we turn to a discussion that brings together scholarship on the carceral state and from Indigenous and critical scholars, to reflect on the role of education in maintaining racial injustices.

### **The school-to-prison pipeline in the context of the carceral state**

The concept of a ‘school-to-prison pipeline’ has emerged in a significant body of international scholarship on youth incarceration. Subini Ancy Annamma traces the development of the term to the US in the early 2000s where it was used by Dan Losen and Johanna Wald who, with colleagues, define it as:

The confluence of the education policies in underresourced public schools and a predominantly punitive juvenile justice system that fails to provide

education and mental health services ... and drastically increases the likelihood that these children will end up with a criminal record rather than a high school diploma (cited in Annamma, 2018, 2-3).

There is a substantial body of research that examines the relationship between school discipline policies and practices and involvement with the criminal justice system. This reports trends showing ‘students who are excluded, temporarily or permanently, are at increased risk of school failure, dropping out, and future justice system involvement’ and ‘a tangible shift towards more punitive measures’ of discipline in schools transnationally (Taylor et al 2018, 2). Policy ideas and frameworks that merge criminal justice and education are often circulated through channels established by settler colonial networks (Taylor 2018, 391).

Much of the research to emerge from the US demonstrates the increasingly punitive nature of school discipline, particularly in schools that are also under-resourced (see Mallett 2016; Novak 2019; Skiba et al 2014). Skiba et al showed that out-of-school suspensions and expulsions were widely used and increasing in frequency in schools in the US, that school exclusion disproportionately impacts African American students and students marginalised by other factors such as disability, Indigeneity and sexuality (2014, 557). School exclusion was also associated with academic disengagement, depressed academic achievement, risk for contact with law enforcement and detention and incarceration (Skiba et al 2014, 557).

These trends are mirrored across other settler colonial contexts. Of note is the persistent finding in the US, Canada, the UK, NZ and Australia that students racialised Black, Brown and/or Indigenous are both more likely to be subject to recorded disciplinary measures in



schools and more like to be incarcerated. For example, in the US a range of studies have reported on the over-representation of African American students receiving discipline and school-based punishments (see Barnes & Motz 2018; Marchbanks et al 2018). In both the US and Canada, First Nations and Native Alaskan students have reported higher rates of school disciplining (see Chin et al 2019; Gebhard, 2013). Maori and Pasifika students in Aotearoa New Zealand have reported experiences of exclusionary disciplining (Sutherland, 2011). And in Australia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students are disproportionately represented in experiencing suspensions and expulsions from school and classroom discipline (Graham et al 2020; Victorian Ombudsman 2017; Manolev et al 2020; McKnight et al 2019). Indigenous, Maori, Pacific Islander and South Sudanese young people are also over-represented in the criminal justice system in Australia (Cunneen 2019; Anthony 2020).

While the school-to-prison pipeline metaphor offers some important opportunities for reflecting on how education policies and practices can push students out of schools and into prisons and has been used for activist purposes, it has clear limitations (Annamma 2018, 4). The metaphor focuses on a set of social practices that are ‘disproportionately applied to children of color’ and that create education spaces that surveil and exclude students (Annamma 2018, 5). Annamma argues that this fails to fully account for how ‘punishment of Black and Brown bodies occurs *spatially*’ (2018, 5, original emphasis) and often in a non-linear fashion with young people ‘bounced ... between several institutions’ over time (2018, 6). By focussing just on school and prison, the pipeline metaphor also fails to account for the multifaceted experiences of institutionalisation that many incarcerated students encounter, including for example, in the welfare, out-of-home care, schooling and policing systems (see Annamma 2018, 5). Or as Gebhard has observed from the Canadian context, the problem of

youth incarceration can be seen less as a pipeline and more as a web of ‘intertwined, punitive threads’ (2013, 1).

Discussing the logics of the school-to-prison pipeline for Native students in Arizona, Chin et al (2019, 578) argue that it is ‘rooted in ideologies of discipline’ that were created in ‘the boarding school movement’, where Native students were forced into attending boarding schools designed for their assimilation. They argue that ‘colonization has shifted from forced assimilation through removal to a removal from schooling for failure to properly assimilate’ (Chin et al 2019, 578). They build on the metaphor, calling the pipeline ‘a filtration system for capitalism,’ ‘sorting out those who may participate or those subject to the warehousing, labour and disenfranchisement of people through mass incarceration’ (Chin et al 2019, 579). Some bodies are marked as deviant, and certain ‘student behaviours, thoughts and actions’ become the problem, rather than ‘institutional and systemic barriers’ (Chin et al 2019, 582).

By extending the notion of the pipeline to account for the range of social factors that produce carcerality, criminalisation and incarceration, the education system can be situated within broader racialised state apparatus. Some scholars, largely discussing the North American context, theorise the modern state as a carceral or prison state (see Dillon 2018; Hernández et al 2015; Richie 2012; Schoenfeld 2018; Wang 2018). This draws attention to how the prison is used as a function of a capitalist system. Dillon argues that in the US the prison has emerged ‘for the capture and management of racialized and gendered populations considered waste under the logics of late twentieth-century racial capitalism’ (2018, 7). Meiners suggests that the terms ‘carceral state’ and ‘prison-industrial complex’ provide opportunities to ‘highlight the multiple and intersecting state agencies and institutions (including not-for-profit organizations) that have punishing functions and effectively police poor communities

beyond the physical site of the prison: child and family services, welfare/workfare agencies, public education, immigration, health and human services agencies, and more' (2016, 16).

Thus the institutions of the modern state—including both the school and the prison—can be understood as connected to the sorting processes and built-in inequalities of racial capitalism.

These built-in aspects of inequality in settler colonial institutions are precisely the issues that scholars like Bishop (2021), as discussed above, contend with when proposing that the system cannot be reformed. These issues animate the work of abolitionist scholars and activists who pursue an orientation to the problems of inequality that seeks to dismantle the structures that maintain oppressions (see Love, 2019; Davis, 2011; Estes et al, 2021; Loyd, 2012). Abolitionist thinking allows a shift from what Angela Davis calls a 'myopic' focus on the existing system to imagining a transformed system that is structured completely differently (Davis, 2011, 106). Education scholar Bettina Love adds that abolition involves a simultaneous tearing down of unjust systems and building up of 'radically revolutionary and sustainably empowering new systems of justice' (2019, 91).

These insights provide a clear challenge to liberal framings of inclusion and encourage attention to the racial logics of exclusion. Fashing-Varner et al suggest 'education and police/punishment policies are tied to the economic imperative of free-market capitalism' (2014, 411) and thus a discourse of crisis in the US keeps the education and prison industrial complexes continuing (2014, 412). In this view, processes of exclusion are not accidental but part of a political economy of carceralism which maintains racial injustices in schools and broader society. While it has so far been missed by scholars of education in Australia, there is a rich scholarship on settler coloniality and carceralism in Australia that elucidates the convergence of colonialism and capitalism in the production of racialised containment and

injustice, and could productively work to analyse the role of schooling in these processes. For example, criminologist Thalia Anthony argues that ‘colonial carceralism’ in Australia has ensured Indigenous people have been detained in various forms throughout the operation of the Australian state (2020, 39-43). This has included ‘confinement on government settlements, church missions, pastoral stations and homesteads, [which] sought to civilise and discipline Indigenous people into settler ways of living’ (2020, 41).

Goenpul scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson argues that settler colonial societies founded on dispossession produce forms of settler sovereignty that naturalise exclusion of Indigenous peoples (2011). Moreton-Robinson argues that settler states such as ‘Australia, Canada, the United States and New Zealand are racial states whereby patriarchal white sovereignty as a regime of power is the defining and refining condition of their formations, ordaining them ontologically with a sense of divinity’ (2011, 645). The naturalisation of white settler sovereignty disguises the roots of Indigenous exclusion in racial capitalism. Strakosch and Macoun argue that for settler colonial states, dispossession is a foundational logic troubled by Indigenous survival and assertions of sovereignty (2012, 50).

In addition to the dispossession and confinement of settler colonialism, McCallum argues that Indigenous people in Australia were criminalised by their ‘exclusion from the social sphere’ (2017, 5). Crucially, by interrogating the connections between schooling, welfare and white liberal law in the Australian state of Victoria through the twentieth century, he identifies Indigenous exclusion as a deliberate product of ‘white liberal governance’ (2017, 6) which has produced ‘the criminalisation of Indigenous children’ (2017, 7). McCallum argues that this mode of governance melded liberal political reason and law ‘with discipline, regulation and normalisation’ which produced an ‘informal law’ steeped in racial logics and with the

aim of disciplining and controlling all aspects of Indigenous people's lives (2017, 10). This is visible in the regulation of family life through the valorisation of nuclear family structures, the disciplinary creation of categories of people centred on white moral norms, and the creation of special exceptions to law and legal process in 'governing Indigenous people' (McCallum 2017, 10). All this creates an 'authoritarian liberalism' in which race is central to the disciplinary powers of 'science, rationality and specialisation' and which came to form the basis of the legal, political and educational order (McCallum 2017, 10).

Central to policies directed towards Indigenous people in Australia in the late 1800s and early 1900s was the expansion of compulsory schooling to Indigenous people—thus 'inclusion' in education for most Indigenous people was born alongside 'the breaking up of families, removal from land, denial of Aboriginal identity and closely supervised surveillance and correction' (McCallum 2017, 21). Schooling and enclosure were inseparable strategies—disrupting relations between generations and between families, separating children from Indigenous socialisation, and generating discipline designed to inculcate the habits of industrious white working class at the same time Indigenous people were denied the 'ordinary standards of productive white citizenship' (McCallum 2017, 270). Historian Beth Marsden has shown that the 'continued use of institutions that were developed for criminalised children for the "education" of Aboriginal students reveal much about how Australian governments have approached the development of policies and practices for the schooling of Aboriginal children' (2020, 11). Thus, it is evident that schooling does not sit outside of the settler colonial governing apparatus but is deeply entangled in its racial project.

Understanding that schooling has been deeply intertwined with the logics of dispossession and a tool for racialised discipline and assimilation provides a serious challenge to the idea of

education as a straightforward social good and for normative models of inclusion. One of the critiques of the school-to-prison pipeline metaphor is that it can easily assume that school is a place in which the individual may be reformed so as not to get pushed along the ‘pipeline’ towards prison (see Meiners 2016, 9). Yet schooling is too frequently part of the problem. Underestimating the culpability of schooling may only work to reinforce white norms of inclusion that have their origins in racialised assimilation. Instead, to secure educational justice, we can work to understand the forms of educational exclusion that operate in schools, and the connections between schooling and broader systems of carceralism within racial capitalism/settler colonialism. In the next section, we make a preliminary map of modes of education exclusion that operate in settler colonial Australia, focusing our attention on the states of New South Wales and Victoria. By zeroing in on the most populous and most urban states, we aim to show the ‘normality’ of educational exclusion and youth incarceration across settler colonial Australia.

### **Mapping the modes of school exclusion in settler colonial Australia**

Our discussion so far has demonstrated how exclusion based on race is a foundational aspect of the modern settler colonial state, operating under racial capitalism. As Indigenous scholars have shown over many decades, the system of education in Australia was constructed to exclude Indigenous people, or to include in ways that have facilitated racialised and gendered processes of class stratification and training for the lower rungs of the workforce, and the active denial and erasure of Indigenous languages and forms of knowledge (see Brown 2018; Dodson 1994; Herbert 2012; Hogarth 2018; Lowe et al 2014; Nakata 2007; Rose 2012; Rahman 2013). There is a significant and growing body of scholarship that examines how curriculum and pedagogy are part of how schools sift and sort students, which marginalises

and excludes (see for example, Keynes 2021; Lowe & Yunkaporta 2013; Rudolph, 2019; Rahman, 2013; Salter & Maxwell, 2016; Shay, 2015; Cabiles 2021).

We have chosen to focus here on lesser examined modes of exclusion in education. The modes that follow seek to account for how other social institutions interact and intersect with schooling to exclude based on racism. We see this as important as these institutions (including policing, family welfare, out-of-home care, criminal justice) work in concert with schooling to uphold racial capitalism and settler colonial power, and understanding their operation adds important perspectives to the significant insights generated by work on exclusion through curricula and pedagogy. In Table 1 we outline a range of modes of exclusion that require further research.

*Table 1: Modes of exclusion in schools, NSW and Victoria*

<b>Mode of exclusion</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Police presence in schools	<p>NSW has a system of School Liaison Police, who develop and implement educational programs, provide advice and guidance on ‘security, intervention strategies and child protection matters’ and aim generally to increase contact between all high schools and police (NSW Police Force 2021). NSW Police also run a ‘School Safe’ program in primary schools which includes the tagline ‘Remember, police are friendly. You will never get into trouble for asking the police to help’ (NSW Police Force 2021). However, the experience of racialised— particularly Indigenous— young people with police in NSW is frequently characterised by force and violence (see Blanco 2018) thus the presence of police in schools may exacerbate issues of racial discrimination.</p> <p>In 2018, the Victorian Opposition announced plans to place 100 more police in schools as School Resource Officers, in addition to the already existing program of police youth liaisons in schools. The Opposition proposed that these officers be sent to ‘at risk’ schools— a dog whistle demonstrating the link between race, disadvantage and criminalisation. It linked this to proposals for ‘tough sentencing, bail and parole changes’ to ‘help break the cycle of youth crime’ (Matthew Guy MP, 2019). In 2021 Victoria Police pushed to increase their presence in schools (Clayton, 2021). However, youth crime rates in Victoria have fallen since the last police in schools program, which ended in 2005.</p>

Punitive school discipline	Australian schools use suspensions and expulsions to manage ‘problem’ students. In both NSW and Victoria, expulsion can be from a particular school or from all public (state) schools. Grounds for expulsion in both states include disruption to teaching and learning, so-called anti-social behaviour, illegal activity, or issues of violence. Expulsions from individual schools can be permanent in both states (Manolev et al 2020; NSW Education and Communities, 2021). A 2017 investigation by the Victorian Ombudsman found that school expulsions in Victorian Government schools had increased by 25 per cent from 2014-2015. It found that ‘although the number of students expelled each year was low overall, that ‘those who were expelled were often from vulnerable student groups’, such as disabled students, Indigenous students and students in out of home care (2017, 4-5). The New South Wales Ombudsman Inquiry into Behaviour Management in Schools, similarly noted that Indigenous students, those in out of home care and disabled students were over-represented in school suspensions (2017).
The age of criminal responsibility	In both NSW and Victoria, the age of criminal responsibility is 10. This means children are more likely to be targeted by police; for example, NSW Police strip-searched 344 boys between 2016 and 2019, including one 11-year old, one 12-year-old, and four 13-year-old boys (Redfern Legal Centre 2019). It also increases the chances that children spend time in prison on remand; the Victorian Sentencing Advisory Council reports that in 2017-18 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and children from Sudanese, Maori and Pasifika backgrounds were overrepresented in the remand population (2020). The low age of criminal responsibility reinforces a racialised web of exclusion from society, making it more likely students will experience alienation from education generally (Manolev at al 2020). A recent inquiry into youth justice centres in Victoria explains youth offending is linked to issues of disadvantage and identifies Maori, Pacific Islander and South Sudanese young people as over-represented in the youth justice system (Legal and Social Issues Committee 2018, 24-26).
Alternate education pathways	Schools regularly participate in directing students deemed ‘underperforming’ to alternative forms of education. This includes non-university pathways that push students into technical and trades education (NSW Education and Communities, 2021). Alternative schooling is also used for ‘problem’ students who have been expelled, or otherwise identified as ‘at risk’. The NSW Expulsion Policy includes referral of students to alternative education pathways (NSW Education and Communities, 2021).
Schools and child removal	Students who are placed into care are much more likely to be absent from school in NSW (ACWA 2017). And children who live with adults who were removed as children are more likely to miss school (Lewis et al 2019, 50). Young people in the care system have reported negative experiences with the police and schools, demonstrating that they do not feel safe in a range of institutions that are supposedly there to protect and care for them (Cerreto and Clarke 2018).



The modes of exclusion mapped in Table 1 show how schools are deeply connected to other governing apparatus within the settler colonial state. Broader practices of surveillance, control, dispossession, exclusion and punishment are brought into schools and extended through these intersecting practices. For example, the law-and-order discourse surrounding African young people in Victoria (Windle 2008) demonstrates how racialised young people are at much greater risk of police harassment and suggests that the presence of police in schools may exacerbate harassment. Police powers such as move on laws allow the targeting and discrimination of groups of racialised youths and this is often mirrored rather than ameliorated in schools, reinforcing criminalisation based on racism.

School is typically seen as the place for children who are criminalised to be rehabilitated (Legal and Social Issues Committee 2018). Yet schools can also be sites of alienation, violence, harsh discipline and racism for Indigenous students and students of colour. As outlined above, state care has long been used as a tool for the separation of Indigenous families, and schooling has played a key role in supporting and institutionalising such separation. The criminalisation of child neglect as discussed above, and the idea that neglected children are ‘at risk’ of criminal behaviour, highlights the punitive web of welfare systems, policing and racialisation (McCallum 2017). This web of practices that position Indigenous and other groups of racialised young people at risk of harm by the state requires urgent research attention. In the next section we outline the importance of such a research agenda being connected to understandings of racial capitalism and settler colonialism in the carceral state.

### **A research agenda for addressing racial exclusion**

The BLM movement has provided an opportunity for comparative scholarship in education which carefully attends to how the global webs of structural racism and carceralism that reproduce racial capitalism and its attendant inequalities are woven into schooling systems. Here, we have focused on understanding this in an Australian context, where this has largely been missing in education scholarship. As we have shown, a predominantly US-based literature on the school-to-prison-pipeline provides an opening for discussing how racialisation infuses acts of school exclusion and produces the need for inclusion. Further, though, Indigenous and critical scholarship outside of educational scholarship can assist in understanding the interactions between carceral logics, settler colonial dominance and racial capitalism. Guided by insights from this literature and our resultant (non-exhaustive) identification of modes of exclusion, in what follows we suggest a research agenda for examining school exclusion, racism and carceralism.

As discussed above, discipline focused on behavioural norms in settler colonial schools has been part of assimilation, normalising whiteness and othering Indigenous peoples and cultures. However, the literature on school exclusion in Australia rarely examines the context of punitive discipline more broadly than metrics of evident discrimination. Thus a research agenda that examines disciplining processes *before* suspension and expulsion that target certain racialised students, with an understanding of the racist history of behavioural norms in schooling is urgently needed. Calls for policy reform tend to focus on supporting the individual student through holistic interventions—that is, strategies of inclusion (see Manolev et al 2020). However, by asking wider questions in relation to harsh discipline in schools, criminalisation of student behaviour, the punitive and racialised histories of welfare systems, and the racialisation of risk, we propose an agenda that turns the focus back onto the practices of school systems that require reform.

For example, the presence of police in schools requires further attention and critique in Australia, grounded in an understanding of the risk of the criminalisation of student behaviours, and the racialised nature of policing and criminalisation in a settler colonial context. Like policing in schools there is little research in Australia that examines the racialised aspects of alternate education pathways and the intersection of these practices with discipline and exclusion within the settler colonial state. The question of whether Australian schools, therefore, work to support or further alienate students who have had contact with police, been directed to an alternate education pathway and/or experienced interaction with the justice system, needs further research.

A research agenda that is attentive to and critically examines the intersection of racism and carcerality offers the field of comparative education research opportunities to engage in reparative justice agendas (on reparations in education see Sriprakash et al 2020). Schools and education are implicated in the reproduction of racial injustice globally—if we continue to imagine schooling as ameliorative, we risk reproducing the same dynamics we seek to challenge. Schooling systems generate and reinscribe racialised processes through modes of exclusion. We argue that comparative education scholarship must be grounded in this recognition if it is to disrupt the reproduction of racial injustices and engage with the possibilities afforded by critiques of carcerality and by abolitionist thinking. We therefore propose that future research in comparative education be attentive to how racial exclusion, containment and discipline is central to the settler colonial and capitalist projects, with Australia offering contextual perspectives that are vital to understanding global relations of racial inequality. Such work must also seek to undermine and disrupt carceral logics in schooling if it is to contribute to global racial justice.

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